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Serial No. 09/988,222

which protrudes into the interior cartridge space 116 and a series of integral radial support ribs 118-2. The arcuate central wall 118-1 and support ribs 118-2 collectively serve to enhance the structural integrity of the filter cartridge body 112 at its lower end so that it may withstand the inlet pressures P1 associated with the inlet fluid entering the interior cartridge space 116.

Please change the paragraph appearing on page 11, line 27 through page 12, line 11 to read as follows:

Virtually any filtration media conventionally employed to filter fluids may be employed as the filtration media in the filter cartridges according to the present invention. Thus, for example, the filtration media may be comprised of a non-woven mass of melt-blown polymeric fibers formed, for example, from thermoplastic polymers, preferably polyolefins such as polypropylene, polyethylene and the like. Especially preferred filter media for filter cartridges are those as described more fully in commonly owned U.S. Patent Nos. 5,591,335 and 6,342,283, the entire content of each being expressly incorporated hereinto by reference. Alternatively (or additionally) the filter media may be comprised of pleated sheets of non-woven or woven filter materials which are, in and of themselves, highly conventional in the fluid filtration art.

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the pending claims herein as follows:²

1. (Amended) A filter cartridge comprising:
a generally cylindrical filter body having a fluid-filtration media, and
at least one length-adjustable end cap attached to an end of said filter body, wherein

² Pursuant to Rule 121(c), a marked-up version of the amended claims appears in Appendix II hereto and shows all changes by underlining added language and bracketing deleted language.

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said length-adjustable end cap includes an annular stationary ring member and a moveable connection member slideably received within said annular stationary ring member so as to be moveable longitudinally relative thereto, and wherein one of said stationary ring member and said moveable connection member includes a pair of cross-supports.

Please cancel claim 2.

4. (Amended) The filter cartridge of claim 3, wherein said length-adjustable end cap includes an annular base member attached to an end of the cylindrical filter body, and wherein said stationary ring member is generally cylindrical and protrudes upwardly from said annular base member.

14. (Amended) The filter cartridge of claim 3, wherein said stationary ring member includes a seal ring in slideable sealing contact with said neck portion of said moveable connection member.

22. (Amended) A filter cartridge comprising:

- a filter body which defines a generally cylindrical interior space;
 - a length-adjustable top end cap attached to an upper end of said filter body and defines an opening to allow fluid-communication with said interior space of said filter body;
 - a bottom end attached to a lower end of said filter body so as to close said interior space thereat; wherein
- said length-adjustable top end cap includes:
- (i) an annular base member attached to said filter body;
 - (ii) a generally cylindrical stationary ring member integrally joined at one end to, and extending upwardly from, said annular base member;
 - (iii) a moveable member having a generally transverse annular support flange,